encouraged that the day of the Lord will come (as Malachi also affirms) and justice will be done. This is the point of the Divine Attributes Formula in Jonah 4:2, which may indicate a temporary forbearance before the eventual requital of sin. The destruction of the mysterious plant in Jonah 4 makes the same point by drawing on prophetic symbolism of judgement. Jonah's error is a one-sided view of Yhwh as always merciful, whereas this is never at the expense of justice. Jonah, like the book's hearers, is invited to demonstrate patience as well as faith and zeal.

It will be clear that I am in sympathy with the author's arguments against the standard approach to the book. The comparison with Malachi is helpful, although I am cautious about making any text primary in a book that is notoriously open to intertextuality. I am not sure that 'cultic imperialism' is the best way to describe that aspect, but a fresh look at the rhetorical power of literature is a good move. I warmly commend this discussion to those looking for a nuanced approach to the nature and message of an inexaustible book.

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PHILIP JENSON
Ridley Hall, Cambridge
ppj22@cam.ac.uk

Second Temple Studies IV: Historiography and History. Edited by ALICE HUNT. Pp. ix + 126. (Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies, 550.) New York and London: T & T Clark (a Continuum imprint), 2012. ISBN 978 0 567 45699 1. £55.

THIS fourth volume of the Second Temple Studies series focuses on different approaches to the reconstruction of biblical history. Following an introduction by Alice Hunt, who provides a brief summary of the essays, eleven papers appear, of which five respond to other contributions. A bibliography that includes the references cited in the essays as well as Scripture and Author indexes conclude the volume.

Niels Peter Lemche, 'How to Do History? Methodological Reflections', at the beginning of the volume, again calls into question the enterprise of writing a history of ancient Israel from the biblical material. In so doing, he criticizes the biblical histories written by those he characterizes as evangelical and

concludes with praise for Liverani's history. His essay is followed by that of Sara Mandell, 'Response to Niels Peter Lemche's "How to Do History?"', which is sympathetic to his view. She notes the nature of history writing in the ancient world and antiquity, but primarily focuses attention on a critique of literary criticism, which she suggests 'serves nobody' (p. 23). Her contribution is much like a rallying cry to focus on historical analyses as outlined by Lemche.

The next four contributions fit together to some extent as they pay attention to the role of archaeology in history writing. William G. Dever, 'Archaeology, History-Writing, and Ancient Israel', sets out the possibilities of documenting a history of ancient Israel on the basis of the material evidence and helpfully notes that history writing is not reducible simply to an accurate account of the historical reality of a people's past, but involves a range of foci—narrative, political, socio-economic, intellectual, cultural, technological, material, natural, and long-term. In response to him, Douglas A. Knight, 'Reflections on Archaeology, Historiography, and Ancient Israel: A Response to William G. Dever', acknowledges the role of archaeology, but rightly points out that artefacts cannot be interpreted and evaluated to the exclusion of literary data. At the same time, Knight also draws attention to the positive influence of revisionist thinking, in that methodology, as well as facts, must be constantly scrutinized. Diana Edelman, 'Writing a History of Yehud in the Persian Period: Creating Understanding', offers an overview to the different ways of thinking through the reconstruction of historical situations with a focus on subjectivity. She concludes with regard for the archaeological data and the pitfalls in its use and she highlights again that 'History-writing is not identical to history' (p. 44). Thomas L. Thompson responds to her contribution in his 'Response to Diana Edelman's "Writing a History of Yehud in the Persian Period"', and raises clear objectives to her reasoning on a number of levels. For example, with respect to the inclusion of temple-building data in Ezra 1 and 3, Edelman assumes authorial intention, but Thompson points out that she does not engage with the question of the literature's genre or purpose.

The next essay by Jerome H. Neyrey, S.J. presents an argument for the inclusion of social scientific methods in 'What Do I Do? Why Do I Do It? Reading the New Testament through Social-Science Lenses'. This essay helpfully notes two different types of social approaches to the biblical material; one with a question about influences on thinking and its effect on a group

and the other with a question of the cultural systems that apply social models. The essay contrasts the results of the two methodological approaches and provides an overview to social-scientific models that would enhance biblical study. The essay stands out in the volume as attempting to highlight new insights from anthropology and to steer the reader to additional resources. In response, Ingrid Hjelm, 'Response to Jerome H. Neyrey's "What Do I Do? Why Do I Do It?"', points out that the models advocated by Neyrey are value-laden and draws attention to how literary production is a social act. In addition, she points to a number of examples that suggest that ancient authors drew from literary tropes rather than real life in the production of their stories, which underlines a question of how useful anthropological models are in illuminating the text.

The essay by Norman K. Gottwald, 'Historiography: Creating Understanding', stands alone as it has no response and it is an overview of the integration of historical-literary criticism with social-scientific approaches and the attention to power as exemplified in his own work. Gottwald supplies examples of his approach from Nehemiah 5 and Isaiah 40–55.

The contribution by Alice Hunt, 'The Importance of Context', constitutes a *raison d'être* for the volume. Her essay provides a survey of the work of Lemche, Thompson, and Dever with attention to points of contact among their assumptions and work. While she casts a glance at the historical enterprises of Liverani and Grabbe, she focuses more attention on the recent historiography of Provan, Long, and Longman and boldly concludes that 'Their premise here cannot be sustained' (p. 109). So, although she seeks to promote methodology as a common basis for future discussion, she creates a line in the sand for what is acceptable. Lester L. Grabbe, 'Response to Alice Hunt's "The Importance of Context"', provides a fitting conclusion to the volume by noting that the perceived crisis in biblical history reflects an oversimplification of the issue and that scholars who tend to be aligned with one camp or another actually have more in common than at first glance.

The volume represents a somewhat disjointed collection of essays based loosely around the theme of the interpretation and reconstruction of biblical history, but it draws attention to a range of opinions on possibilities and pitfalls. To be sure, the reader jumps into the middle of a discussion that is at times acrimonious and encounters presuppositions and arguments that are already well established. An introduction to guide the reader through the larger debate, rather than just summarizing the contributions,

would have been helpful. In addition, the definition of what history is would have been a helpful consideration: is it only the accurate picture of a people's past that corresponds to historical reality or can it involve other discussions, such as the history of a text or the history or ideas (see Thompson's piece)? For instance, it is not clear to me why writing a history according to the perspective of the biblical writers is not acceptable, as suggested by Lemche and Hunt. Even when the biblical literature is not historically accurate, the biblical writers regard this literary history as a given and history is, in fact, important to how they conceive of and convey their past (note Hjelm's critique and that the Old Testament contains three large blocks of history writing—the Patriarchal History, the Deuteronomistic History, and the Chronistic History, including Ezra and Nehemiah). Greater reflection on a definition of history intrinsic to the literature itself rather than the imposition of a modern definition of history on the texts and the critique of individual reconstructions thereby would have added a nuance to the debate reflected in this volume and enabled it to expand in new directions.

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Jill Middlemas
University of Zurich, Switzerland
jillmiddlemas@googlemail.com

Three Versions of Esther: Their Relationship to Anti-Semitic and Feminist Critique of the Story. By Tricia Miller. Pp. xxvi + 217. (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis & Theology, 74.) Leuven: Peeters, 2014. ISBN 978 90 429 3042 1. Paper €64.

This monograph is based on Miller's dissertation from Claremont Graduate University. Her main argument centres on the influence of the history of interpretation of the Greek versions of Esther, the Old Greek (OG) and Alpha Text (AT), on feminist and anti-Semitic critiques of Esther. She emphasizes that this is 'in spite of the fact that MT Esther tells the story of a woman's leading role in the prevention of an attempted genocide of the Jews in Persia, and in spite of the fact that OG and AT Esther are quite similar to other Jewish literature written to address anti-Semitic sentiment in the Greco-Roman world' (p. 112).

In chapter 1, Miller surmises the historical context and authorial intent of MT Esther to be written during the late